

of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

MARKING 180TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREECE'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the country where democracy was born and where democracy returned 180 years ago.

March 25, 2001, marks the 180 anniversary of Greece's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Before then, Greece had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, during which time Greeks were deprived of their civil rights.

It is with great pride that Hellenic Americans recount the stories of how their ancestors in Greece stood together and fought against repression by continuing to educate Greek children in their culture, their language, and their religion, even under the threat of death.

This year, the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York has as its parade theme the Hellenic-American educational system. It is especially important that they are paying tribute to education, cultural heritage, religious learning, and the Hellenic-American values and ideals that are taught in the United States Hellenic parochial schools.

□ 1845

Education has always been the key to preserving Hellenic culture, values, and religion.

This year I have the honor of being selected grand marshal, along with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who cochairs the Hellenic Caucus with me, and Assemblyman Michael Giannaris from New York and California Secretary of State Phillip Ajjedilis and Honorary Grand Marshal Lucas Tsilas. We will have the privilege of marching with many members of my Astoria community, the largest Hellenic community outside of Athens.

The Hellenic and Phil-Hellenic community has a great deal to celebrate. They will celebrate the coming Olympics and the continued efforts of the Hellenic Caucus to seek a peaceful understanding with Turkey on the issues of the Greek Islands and Cyprus occupation. Here in the United States, we often take democracy for granted. In the world, there are still countries fighting for basic human rights. On this day of Greek independence, let us remember the words of Plato, and I quote: "Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a kind of equality to equals and unequals alike."

Is that not a great way to describe democracy?

The best way to express the feeling of the Hellenic community is the Greek National Anthem that tells of their struggle for independence.

I thank the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York for all of the contributions they have made to our community and in their efforts to make each year's Greek Independence Day celebration more exciting than the last. I know that I will remember this year. Zeto E Eleftheria. Long live freedom in Greece and in the entire world.

CELEBRATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, today I, too, proudly rise to celebrate Greek Independence Day and the strong ties that bind the nations of Greece and the United States.

It was 180 years ago when the people of Greece began a journey that would mark the symbolic rebirth of democracy in the land where those principles to human dignity were first espoused. The word "democracy" stems from two Greek words: "demos," meaning "of the people" and "kratos," meaning "power" and "strength." On this anniversary, it is the power and strength of the Greek people and their courage and commitment to the principles of human government and self-determination that we celebrate.

Revolutions embody a sense of heroism, bringing forth the greatness of the human spirit in the struggle against oppression. It was Thomas Jefferson who said that, and I quote, "one man with courage is a majority." Quoting Jefferson on the anniversary of Greek independence is particularly appropriate. Jefferson and the rest of the Founding Fathers looked back to the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers for inspiration as they sought to craft a strong democratic state. And in 1821, it was the Founding Fathers of our Nation to whom the Greeks looked for inspiration as they began their journey toward freedom.

Encouraged by the American revolution, the Greeks began their rebellion after 4 centuries of Turkish oppression, facing what appeared to be insurmountable odds. Like the United States, Greece faced the prospect of having to defeat an empire to obtain liberty. Many lives were sacrificed at the altar of freedom. In the face of impending defeat, the Greek people showed great courage and rallied around the battle cry, "Eleftheria I Thanatos," liberty or death.

Similar words, "Give me liberty or give me death," spoken in America

only 5 decades before by Patrick Henry, embodied the Greek patriots' unmitigated desire to be free.

News of the Greek revolution met with widespread feelings of compassion in the United States. The Founding Fathers eagerly expressed sentiments of support for the fledgling uprising. Several American Presidents, including James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, conveyed their support for the revolution through their annual messages to Congress. William Harrison, our ninth President, expressed his belief in freedom for Greece saying, "We must send our free will offering. The 'Star-spangled Banner,'" he went on to say, "must wave in the Aegean, a messenger for eternity and friendship to Greece."

Various Members of Congress also showed a keen interest in the Greek struggle for autonomy. Henry Clay, who in 1825 became Secretary of State, was a champion of Greece's fight for independence. Among the most vocal was Daniel Webster from Massachusetts, who frequently aroused the sympathetic interests of his colleagues and other Americans in the Greek revolution. It should not surprise us that the Founding Fathers would express such keen support for Greek independence, for they themselves had been inspired by the ancient Greeks and their own struggle for freedom. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "To the ancient Greeks, we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, the American colonists, out of gothic darkness." Our two nations share a brotherhood bonded by the common blood of democracy, birthed by Lady Liberty, and committed to the ideal that each individual deserves the right of self-determination.

We all know that the price of liberty can be very high. History is replete with the names of the millions who have sacrificed for it. Socrates, Plato, Pericles, and many other great scholars throughout history warned that we maintain democracy only at great cost. The freedom we enjoy today is due to a large degree to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past in Greece, in America, and all over the world.

Madam Speaker, on this 180th birthday of Greek independence, when we celebrate the restoration of democracy to the land of its conception, we also celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and the strength of man's will. The goals and values that the people of Greece share with the people of the United States reaffirm our common democratic heritage. This occasion also serves to remind us that we must never take for granted the right to determine our own fate.

Remembering the sacrifice of the brave Greeks who gave their lives for liberty helps us all realize, Madam Speaker, how important it is to be an active participant in our own democracy, and that is why we honor those